

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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R 100720Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO USDOC WASHDC
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8343
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 3341

ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BEXP, SY
SUBJ: FEB 79 BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION SPECIALIZED TRADE
MISSION

REF: USDOC 10391

1. EMBASSY WELCOMES PROPOSED TRADE MISSION. SYRIA'S
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS CONCENTRATE HEAVILY ON INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS, SUCH AS IRRIGATION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT, FOOD
STORAGE FACILITIES, AND ROAD NETWORK AND PORT EXPANSION.
IN ADDITION, PLAN CONTEMPLATES NEW INDUSTRIES IN SUGAR,
FERTILIZERS, FOOD PROCESSING, AND OTHER IMPORT SUBSTITUTION
INDUCSTRIES, NEW PHOSPHATE MINING FACILITIES, VARIOUS
"NEW TOWNS", AS WELL AS 90,000 NEW HOUSING UNITS, AND
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NEW TOURISM FACILITIES. GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED PROJECTS
AS EMBODIED IN THE FOURTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN THUS OFFER
NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. CONTRACTORS, ENGINEERS,
AND CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS-HANDLING EQUIPMENT
MANUFACTURERS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE INSOFAR AS
SEVERAL OF SYRIA'S CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS WILL BE
USAID-FINANCED, NOTABLY THE LATTAKIA-TARTOUS ROAD

AND THE DAMASCUS-DERAA HIGHWAY.

2. LACK OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE IS CURRENTLY HAMPERING SYRIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. BUSINESSMEN IN FIELDS OF CONSTRUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT HAVE EXPRESSED GUARDED OPTIMISM ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR 1979. AS NEW INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION COMES ON STREAM IN 1979-1980 TIME PERIOD, NEW REVENUES SHOULD BE GENERATED AND IMPORT SUBSTITUTION SHOULD RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN EXCHANGE SAVINGS.

3. AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION: THE SYNDICATE OF ENGINEERS, A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION OF SYRIA'S ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS, HAS EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE TO SEE U.S. ENGINEERS ON EITHER A FORMAL OR INFORMAL BASIS. SYNDICATE HAS MENTIONED AS EXAMPLES SEMINARS ON ENGINEERING SUBJECTS SPONSORED BY BRITISH AND FRENCH. DEPENDING ON NATURE OF SUBJECT TRADE MISSION AND ITS PARTICIPANTS, WE BELIEVE THAT SYNDICATE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SPONSOR EVENT. EMBASSY IS EAGER TO USE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED BY SUBJECT TRADE MISSION TO MAKE CONTACT WITH A SYRIAN GROUP INFLUENTIAL IN BUSINESS AND IN GOVERNMENT.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PROVIDE ASAP DATA ON NATURE AND COMPOSITION OF PROPOSED EVENT. EMBASSY UNCLASSIFIED

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HAS RECEIVED NO INFORMATION ON MISSION BEFORE. INFORMATION NEEDED FOR FURTHER JUSTIFICATION AND FOR ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY OF SYNDICATE OF ENGINEERS SPONSORSHIP. PELLETREAU

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